

Guidance on General Plan Amendments for Addressing Flood Risk

About this Guidance

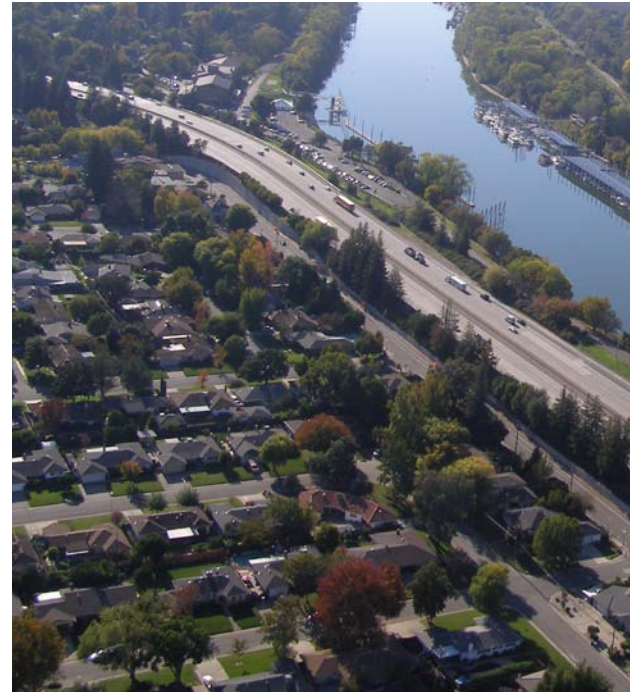
In 2007, the California Legislature passed six landmark bills that outlined a comprehensive approach to improving flood management at both the State and local levels. The flood legislation collectively addressed flood safety, improved flood management in a sustainable and integrated way, and strengthened the linkage between local land use planning decisions and flood management practices with elements to address both the chance of flooding (e.g., improvements to reduce the probability that floods will occur) and the consequences when flooding occurs.

DWR was given a number of responsibilities under the 2007 flood legislation package, including collaborating with local agencies to provide information and other technical assistance. In 2010, as part of its ongoing technical assistance efforts, DWR published [*Implementing California Flood Legislation into Local Land Use Planning: A Handbook for Local Communities \(2010 Handbook\)*](#).

The *2010 Handbook* describes how the 2007 flood legislation affects cities and counties statewide in addressing flood risk as part of local land use planning processes.

Given the continuing and evolving implementation of the 2007 flood legislation, subsequent legislative amendments, and State flood management program developments, DWR has released this *Guidance on General Plan Amendments for Addressing Flood Risk (Guidance)* as an advisory resource for **cities and counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley** to consider when amending their general plans to address flood risk.

DWR prepared this *Guidance* as a resource for cities and counties to use when addressing State law requirements, while providing agencies the ability to adapt information for local conditions. The goal of the *Guidance* is to have a user-friendly document that can benefit the planning, flood management, and public works communities through its practical applications.



Aerial view of the Sacramento River, South Land Park, and the Little Pocket neighborhood (Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, 2009).

The 2007 flood legislation package includes Assembly Bills [162](#), [70](#), [5](#), and [156](#) and Senate Bills [5](#) and [17](#), which added or amended sections in the California Government, Health and Safety, Public Resource, and Water codes. In particular,

- [California Government Code §65302.9](#) contains Senate Bill 5 general plan requirements.
- [California Government Code §65302.9\(c\)](#) requires DWR to collaborate with cities and counties by providing information and technical assistance.
- [California Government Code Section 65007\(h\)](#) defines the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley. Refer to DWR's [2013 Urban Level of Flood Protection Criteria](#) for additional information.

This *Guidance* serves as an extension of the *2010 Handbook*, providing updated information on:

- general plan requirements based on Senate Bill 5 (2007), as amended;
- procedures for requesting data and tools developed by DWR and other agencies; and
- samples of general plan goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures.

[California Government Code §65302.9](#) requires cities and counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley to amend their general plans to include:

- data and analysis contained in the [2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan](#) (2012 CVFPP) (e.g., locations of the facilities of the State Plan of Flood Control and locations of property protected by those facilities);
- locations of flood hazard zones; and
- general plan goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures reflective of the 2012 CVFPP.

Compliance Schedule

Cities and counties within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley have up to 24 months after July 2, 2013 (or no later than July 2, 2015), to amend their general plans and an additional 12 months thereafter to update local zoning ordinances (or no later than July 2, 2016, whichever comes first). This process can also include updates to local floodplain management ordinances or other municipal codes to be consistent with the general plan.

[Senate Bill 5 \(2007\)](#), as amended, does not specify any review, approval, or enforcement authority by any State agency, but instead relies on the due diligence of cities and counties to incorporate flood risk considerations into floodplain management and planning in compliance

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A sustainable and resilient flood management system that substantially improves public safety, enhances ecosystems, and contributes to economic growth by implementing integrated flood management throughout California.

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with the general plan amendment requirements as outlined under [California Government Code §65302.9](#).

Guidance Contents: Taking a Broad Approach

[California Government Code §65302.9](#) identifies the 2012 CVFPP as the source of information cities and counties in the Valley should use to amend their local general plans. The 2012 CVFPP is supported by a large body of data, tools, and information, which can be useful for cities and counties to reference and help fill potential data gaps. The 2012 CVFPP was also developed consistent with other DWR flood management planning efforts, including the [Statewide Flood Management Planning \(SFMP\)](#) program and the [California Water Plan](#), which both have a broad integrated water management (IWM) approach.

DWR suggests that cities and counties consider this broad IWM approach and review additional information, relevant data, and program activities from related local, regional, additional State, and federal agencies when amending their general plans.

Requesting Information

DWR is committed to providing information and other technical assistance to cities and counties as they work through their general plan amendment processes. To acquire technical data, such as modeling and topography, or other flood hazard management information that is not readily accessible through this *Guidance*, a request can be made to DWR as follows:

- 1. Email FloodSAFE California at:** FloodSAFE@water.ca.gov
- 2. Email subject:** General Plan Amendments for Addressing Flood Risk, DWR Information/Data Request
- 3. Detailed description:** List each data request in the body of the email. Clearly state why the data are being requested, its intended use, and when the request is needed.
- 4. Contact information:** Provide name, title, affiliation, email, and phone number so DWR can respond appropriately to the request.

For more information and to download the Guidance, go to DWR's Local Flood Risk Planning and Guidance website at: www.water.ca.gov/localfloodriskplanning



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